

# ROBERT BURNS,

SCOTIA'S IMMORTAL BARD:

—\*HIS\*

# LIFE AND LABOURS.

—\*— BY —\*—

REV. ROBERT GRANT.



1884  
(93)

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## WHAT CRITICS SAY.

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I have never read anything on Burns—whether prose or verse—with greater interest. Mr. Grant is evidently well read in the Greek, Latin and English classics; and is, therefore, competent to pronounce a correct judgment as to literary merit. Mr. Grant's lecture is plainly all his own—thoroughly original. It is fragrant with the perfume of literature. It takes hold of the reader with the first sentence; and keeps fast hold of him till the last utterance, and leaves one wishing for more. Though brief it is not incomplete. It contains *much in little*, will bear to be read and re-read, and will repay close study.

REV. SAMUEL BOYD.

Wallace, N. S., Sept. 6th, 1884.

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The Rev. Robert Grant has done a benefit to Literature in publishing his exhaustive and interesting Lecture on Burns. If popularity be judged of by the number of copies already sold, then, it has been presented to an appreciative public. The Author's criticisms are fair and readable, and his extracts from the Poems of Scotia's Immortal Bard are pleasant and instructive.

REV. ROBERT BURNET.

Burlington, Ontario, Aug., 19th, 1884.

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I have read the Rev. Robert Grant's Lecture on the Life and Poetry of Robt. Burns with very great pleasure. It must be a real treat to every true Scotchman. I regard it as a production which reflects credit on the Author.

REV. ALEX. MCLEAN.

Hopewell, N. S., Aug. 30th, 1884.

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As Vennor is gone, one might venture to enter the vacant office, and predict that the Rev. Robert Grant's Lecture will create for the Bard a New Patent of Nobility—not of birth or blood, but of a heavenly and in-born genius—

“The dignities and a’that,”  
“The pith o’sense, the pride o’worth,”  
“Are higher ranks than a’that.”

Of Burns's biographers, I would say what he himself said of certain ladies,

“Herren is fine, and Irvine’s divine,  
Currie has wit, and Walker is braw,  
There is friendship in Hamilton Paul,  
But Grant’s the Jewel o’them a’.”

In his Lecture, his genius has accomplished for Burns what the customs of the East and Northern Europe do for the dead; that is—placed a rosy apple in his hand, as the symbol of rejuvenating power.

REV. W. S. DARRAGH.

Linden, Cumberland Co., N. S., Aug. 30th, 1884.

TO THE FRIENDS OF TRUTH AND FREEDOM.

THIS attempt to assert the everlasting superiority of Robert Burns, and, also, to vindicate his character as a man, is respectfully dedicated to you, in the belief that, however unworthy the execution, the *motives* of the writer will receive your approbation.

## ROBERT BURNS.

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Every tree is known by its fruit, and every region by the productions of its soil. Who would think of scaling the summit of "hoary Alpine Hills," or traversing Siberian wastes to ascertain if the "tender grape appeared?" It would be also a fruitless peregrination to explore the coasts of Greenland with a view to behold the "pomegranates budding forth." In Africa burning sands appear, and sickly plants abound. But, in Nova Scotia, the mayflower "blooms amidst the snow." Ireland is proud of its shamrock, Scotland of its thistle, and England of its rose. And, when the tyrants of Russia have been consigned to merited oblivion, the banks of the Wolga and of the Don will be clothed with rich harvests of "yellow corn." What is true of the dry land is equally true of the "Watery Main." Who has not heard of Labrador, and Loch Fine herring? Who has not read of that

"Some place far abroad  
Where sailors gang to fish for cod?"

As thus appears in the material world,—

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathomed caves of Ocean bear."

It is also equally true that similar phenomena abound in the realms of thought. Greece had its Homer, and Italy its Virgil; France had its Tully, its Fenelon, its Voltaire, and its Lamartine; Spain had its Cervantes, and Germany its Lu<sup>t</sup>her. Even afflicted Ireland can recount its intellectual gladiators, and number among its sons such names as a St. Patrick, a Grattan, a Plunket, a Curran, a Moore, an O'Connell, and a Sheil. Scotland, too, has ever been true to her national motto; and, in spite of all the sneers hurled at her and her sons, from the days of a Samuel Johnson down to the times of an S. G. W. Archibald, a Uniacke, and a Howe, she produced a John Knox, a George Buchanan, a James Thomson, a Thomas Campbell, an Allan Ramsay, an Ettrick Shepherd, and a Sir Walter Scott,—not to speak of her Wallace and her Bruce, her Sir Ralph Abercrombie, her Sir John Moore, her Napiers, and her Sir

Colin Campbell. The names of a Richard the *third*, a Henry the *eight*, a Charles the *second*, and a George the *fourth*, shall ever be remembered with execration. But England shall ever be proud of the fame of a Chaucer, a Spencer, a Shakspeare, a Milton, a Watts, a Cowper, a Dryden, and a Pope.

It can thus be proved that there has never been a nation but has produced its distinguished men. Even the distant China can boast of a Confucius, and Persia of a Zoroaster.

This brings me back to a period 124 years ago (1759). In the month of January of that year, in one of the poorest huts in Scotland, and within two miles of the town of Ayr—that

"Old Ayr which ne'er a town surpasses"—

was born one whose name, especially during the last sixty years, has stood prominent among the children of men. I mean ROBERT BURNS. And whatever others say, or may have said, I say, All honor to the name. He was born in the deepest depths of poverty. He was cradled in obscurity, and "when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." The early choice of Robert Burns was as deliberate as that of Moses himself. Of the latter it is recorded that he preferred to "Suffer affliction with the people of God." The choice of the peasant poet was equally disinterested, and creditable to his generous nature. In early boyhood, he found himself placed in the ranks of those whom long ages of oppression had reduced to a state only a little better than that of slaves. When he attained to the full maturity of his strength, like Goldsmith's Village Pastor,

"He neither changed, nor wished to change his place."

His youthful resolve was thus to stand by that rank in lowly life from which he sprang at first; and, throughout his whole career, he acted up to that choice in a manner that has seldom been equalled, and perhaps never surpassed by any uninspired man—the strictures of adverse critics, whether lay or clerical, to the contrary notwithstanding. During his brief but difficult career of only thirty-seven years, with courage more than human, he withstood the pitiless peltings of the "proud man's scorn and the rich man's contumely?" and, when "sore with hardship pressed," he threw the shield of his protection over downtrodden and oppressed poverty. The virtuous poor he claimed as his own—his peculiar charge. But, like a skilful general, he "carried the war into Africa"—as many a would-be despot during his own and every succeeding age felt, and is destined yet to feel to his cost. Against the brazen forehead of

the purse-proud tyrant, with unerring force, he hurled the shafts of remorseless satire and vengeful sarcasm. The consequence is, that those in lowly life feel that in the person of Robert Burns, as in that of a Cowper and a Watts, there appeared a friend and deliverer. The Ayrshire peasant had more than the ambitious Edward in view when he uttered the battle-cry,—

"Lay the proud usurpers low"

And lordly oppressors in many lands would do well to take heed. Had they done so years ago, their own best interests would have been promoted, and much bloodshed would have been averted.

I shall now consider—

### I.—The position Burns is entitled to occupy *as a Poet.*

In commercial affairs there is a recognized standard of weights and measures. This is true of all civilized nations. But where is the standard of criticism to be found? Is it in the *ipse dixit* of this and that other reviewer? I say it is not. A nice standard men would then have. In English history there was an Addison, a Steel, a Johnson, and a Burke, a Hume, a Macaulay, a Lockhart, a Jeffrey, a Wilson, and a Carlyle. Every one of these sons of genius was a consummate master or style; and, by their writings, they all acquired imperishable fame. But I wonder if it ever occurred to any one that no two of them ever thought or wrote alike; that, with the exception of Addison alone, whose style was faultless, every one of them, at times, infringed the rules of propriety and good taste, both in thought and diction? A Johnson could be both turgid and pompous. A Macaulay could be, and often is, laboured, bombastic, and untruthful. Even Homer sometimes "nods." This being so, we must go to some other quarter for the laws of infallibility as to style. In reply, therefore, to the sneers of a Carlyle and a Maginn, together with all the admirers of a Shakspeare and a Byron, I take my stand within the citadel of Revelation, and affirm that the great God who formed the mind of man, who exercised the right of thought from eternity, must be considered the best judge as to what constitutes accuracy of thought and propriety of style. Where, then, are we the most likely to find the best models of composition? Is it not in the writings of those men whom God taught by his own spirit—those "holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?" But these "holy men" also *wrote*. And they did so, influenced by the teaching of Him who alone is perfect. Therefore, whatever mere worldlings may say, I affirm that the author, whose men-

tal habits and modes of expression come the nearest to the Bible, comes the nearest to perfection.

Among critics, it has been customary to assign to Burns a mere *secondary* rank among the poetic race. The Shakspeares, the Miltons, and the Drydens, are represented as central suns, and Burns as either a satellite or a fixed star of the second or third magnitude. Tried by the rules of *human* criticism, this may have been so. But, as already stated, there is a higher standard—one to which the loftiest intellects must bow. The human mind was never formed even by a Jeffrey, a Brougham, or a Sydney Smith. Christopher North himself was never intrusted with the making of the laws of thought. And, when Edinburgh Reviews, and all the magazines of a Blackwood and a Harper have become moth-eaten, the unlettered pages of a Peter, a James, and a John will be read with delight, and command the admiration of ransomed millions, until suns shall shine and moons shall "wax and wane no more,"

Such is the superiority of the Bible—no matter by whom written—whether by the fisherman, of Galilee or by the herdman of Tekoah. And because Burns received so much of his inspiration from that "holy book divine," he thought and wrote as no other uninspired man ever thought or wrote.

But it may be said, do you mean to represent Burns as equal to the Thomsons, the Miltons, and the Shakspeares? My reply is, that I do, and that, in some respects, he was a greater prodigy than any of them. I also maintain that the standard of criticism that would assign to Burns a rank inferior to *any man that ever lived*, would make a Livy and a Tacitus better historians than Moses, which they never were. Napoleon would then be a greater general than David or Joshua, which he never was. Virgil and Homer would then be greater and better poets than the Psalmist. Lord Bacon would be a greater philosopher than Solomon. Dugald Stewart would be a profounder reasoner than Paul, and, to cap the climax of absurdity and profanity, Chalmers would be a greater preacher than Christ. His astronomical discourses would be superior to Christ's Sermon on the Mount, or Peter's Sermon on the Day of Pentecost. For the writings of Bacon were incomparably more voluminous and abstruse than those of Solomon; Dugald Stewart wrote more elaborately, and with greater pretensions to scholarship than ever Paul did; and Chalmer's style was immeasurably more stately and grandiloquent than the Saviour's—just as a Shakespeare, a Milton, and a Byron are, in appearance, *but in appearance only*, superior to Burns.

## II.—Facts, to prove Burns's matchless superiority.

I. With the exception of the "*Bards of the Bible*,"\* the productions of no other poet ever took such hold of the *popular mind*.

"Paradise Lost" commands the admiration of the learned. It is the delight of the lettered recluse. The sayings of Shakespeare, are the favorite theme, and are well adapted to the mental habits of fashionable life, party chiefs, the scions of nobility and royalty, military officers, and the like. So, also, with the characters of Homer, and Virgil. Hector and Achilles, Ajax, and Nestor, with Æneas, Turnus, and Agamemnon, are represented as demigods. But who were they, and what did they signify without the tens of thousands composing the armed hosts of Greece and Troy? I say that, both by Homer and Virgil, the valor of the private soldier is scarcely ever recognized. Was this fair? Was this the way that Burns treated the rank and file of Bruce's army on the field of Bannockburn? It was not; and it was not the way Sir Walter Scott, and even Byron treated the private soldiers that fought and gained the battle of Waterloo.

The same objection applies to the poetic labors of Milton and Shakspeare. The one does ample justice to the greatness of Satan and his "apostate crew." The other can do ample justice to the many accomplishments of an Othello, a Hamlet, a Juliet, a Julius Cæsar, a Buckingham, and a Macbeth. He can also narrate the warlike achievements of a Warwick, a Richard the Third, and a Henry the Fifth. But I ask again, who were they, and what did they signify, when compared with the millions inhabiting England, Ireland, Scotland, and Denmark? Your boasted Shakspeare could thus do ample justice to the great qualities of

"Kings and belted knights,  
A marquis, duke, and a'that."

But I ask his admirers, how did he treat the common people? It can be proved that, as a general rule, he either ignored their existence altogether, or held them up to ridicule and contempt. To some extent; it was thus with Sir Walter Scott. He could sing the savage customs of our forefathers in the days of Prince Charlie and James the Fourth, with the senseless festivities of Holyrood and Norham Castle, and the horrors of border chivalry. In the "Mariners of England," Campbell immortalized England's

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\* By the ' Bards of the Bible,' is meant the *Inspired writers*.

naval supremacy. In the "Seasons," Thomson celebrates the perfections of Deity, and presents all nature in her sublimest aspects. But, I ask, did the most gifted of them all ever produce anything to surpass Burns's "Vision," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "Mary in Heaven," or "Man was made to Mourn?" They never did.

Where is the poet, and when did he live, whose strains have been so responded to by the common people? All honor to the names of a Cowper and a Watts. Of their poetry it is only fair to affirm that it is perfection itself.

"Their Pilgrim marks the road,  
And guides the progress of the soul to God."

As already observed, British valor is immortalized in the "Pleasures of Hope." The perfections of Deity appear more resplendent, and the beauties of Nature more lovely in the pages of Thomson. But what I maintain is this,—the colors in which Burns depicts the scenery of his native vales are of a *deeper dye*, of a *richer hue*,—the strains in which he sings the griefs, the joys, the hope of human life, are of a *higher order*, they have more of the *seraphic* than is to be found in the effusions of any other poet that ever lived. Just as a Rubens or a Vandyke could produce one painting of such transcendent excellence as to out-distance and render abortive the efforts of all competitors. So with Burns. Actuated by the inspiration of the moment, he embodied his thoughts in verse. And the idea of excelling, or even equalling them never yet entered the mind of man.

## 2. Burns's poverty, his *limited education*, with all the surroundings of his lot in life attest his greatness.

Take such men as Milton, Dryden, Campbell, Sir Walter Scott, or Bryon. Every one of them had the benefit of a finished education. In the Universities of England and Scotland they mingled freely with associates distinguished for their literary, philosophical and scholastic attainments. In the masterpieces of a Hesiod, a Horace, an Ovid, a Socrates, a Cicero, etc., they would find the laws of thought, and the unfading beauties of style illustrated in the most captivating terms. Their daily intercourse with minds enriched and refined by scholarship, would necessarily beget, in their own souls, aspirations for literary fame. They had also the benefit to be derived from foreign travel. They could answer in the affirmative to the inquiry—

"Hath Socrates thy soul refined,  
And hast thou fathomed Tull's mind."

On the Continent, they would come daily in contact with those whose delight it was to frequent that "dark Pierian spring," where

"Shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
But drinking largely sobers it again."

About 100 years ago, some English writer laid it down as an axiom that

"The man who's destined by the muse  
To charm with verse some future age,  
Should early have his bosom fired  
With Virgil's or great Homer's rage."

In the person of Robert Burns this rule was reversed. Of these gifted men there is no evidence that he knew anything more than the name, when his own "verses" began, not only to "charm" but electrify the community in which he lived. By the time he was twenty-five, he astonished the most eminent literati of the day. And now, after the lapse of ninety-seven years, to quote his own beautiful words—

"Time but the impression deeper makes."\*

One of the earliest of his compositions was "The Cotter's Saturday Night"—a poem the merits of which, even if he had never written anything else, are sufficient to transmit his name to the remotest posterity. "Death of Dr. Hornbook," "The Holy Fair," and "The Ordination" followed in quick succession. When he was twenty-eight he went fresh from the plough to Edinburgh. This was truly the "*golden age*" for literary preeminence in modern Athens—the days of Monboddo, Harry Erskine, Robertson, Blair, Hume, McKenzie. With nothing and no one to recommend him but his own native greatness—an intellect the grasp and powers of which were sufficient to make the most learned and renowned quail before him, attired in his native garb, he excited the wonder of the most distinguished men of the age. He took the capital of Scotland by surprise, and walked its streets as a prodigy.

Now, I maintain that the impression produced by Burns in Edinburgh is altogether unexampled in the history of poets. And, up to this time, what had been his opportunities? Education the most limited. Hard, yes the very *hardest* labor all day, and the hardest bed to sleep on at night. The coarsest and scantiest clothes to wear; the coarsest and scantiest food to eat; with none—not so much as one—to associate with whose

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\* "Mary in Heaven."

society might originate or foster any elevated train of thought. All around him bore the traces of the most abject poverty. So far as his prospects in life were concerned, all before him was the "blackness of darkness." It therefore required some bordering on the preternatural for one so situated to produce anything, either in prose or verse, that would live for ever.

In any country in Nova Scotia, where is the youth—a stranger to all the refinements of education—inured all day\* to the severest manual toil, borne down with poverty and fatigue, that could still give expression to thoughts that so "breathed and burned," that such critics as a Sir William Young, a Sir J. A. McDonald, or a Sir Charles Tupper of the present; the Geo. R. Youngs, the Howes, the Johnstons, and the Haliburtons of the past, would read with delight and admiration?

### 3. *The intrinsic merits of Burns's Works* attest the superiority and vastness of his genius.

*As far as it goes*, "Tam O'Shanter" will bear a comparison with anything in Shakspeare. In "The Vision" and in "The Cotter's Saturday Night," there are passages that will suffer nothing by being placed side by side with anything in "Paradise Lost." His "Man was Made to Mourn" is much superior to that splendid poem "The Hermit," by Parnell.† For sprightly vivacity and real drollery, can anything surpass the "Jolly Beggars," In the "Tale of the Twa Dogs," there is more true wisdom and philosophy than is to be found in many a Treatise on Political Economy. Where, within the compass of English literature, is there anything inspired by such formidable love of country as "Scots Wha Hae," and the last 18 lines of "The Cotter's Saturday Night?" or profounder piety than is contained in his version of some of the Psalms of David, or his "Prayer in the Prospect of Death." I am well aware that, by some eminent divines, that prayer has been condemned as heretical. But I maintain that it is orthodox—that Burns's meaning was scriptural.

But it will be objected that Burns wrote only *short* sketches. I reply, the Psalmist did the same. Besides the *length* of a poem does not constitute its excellence—just as the superiority of a painting does not depend on its *size*. Neither is a man's bodily strength proved by the number of his muscular perform-

\*After a hard day's work with the flail, he, at night, composed the "Vision"—a poem of 276 lines—that would compare favorably with anything in Homer or Virgil.

†Parnell was an Irish poet of the 18th century.

ances. Any one of Samson's feats is sufficient proof that he was "more than mortal strong," and that, in him, Achilles would have found more than his match. We must also bear in mind that Burns died *very young*—at the age of thirty-seven years and six months. Had Horace, Virgil, or Homer died at that age, men would never had heard of the "Ars Poetica," the "Æneid," or the "Illiad." Had Shakspeare died at that age, few of his plays would have been written. The same may be said of every one of the other great English poets, with the single exception of Byron, who died at the age of thirty-six. And, had Burns lived twenty years more, who can tell to what realms of thought and worlds remote "beyond the Solar Walk or Milky Way" his heavenborn genius might have led him? This we *do* know,—for some time previous to his death he had it in contemplation to produce something of greater magnitude than any of his previous performances.

4. *The unanimous consent of mankind* is a proof of Burns's superiority.

His transcendent merits have been recognized and confessed all the world over, not only by the unlettered multitude but by the ablest of critics and reviewers. They have been translated into *all* the languages of Modern Europe,\* and, in all English-speaking lands, in the United States, and in the Dominion of Canada, by the shepherd on Australian and New Zealand plains, in the mines of California, by the sailor on the deck, and by the soldier in his barrack, on the banks of the Ganges and the Indus, and in different parts of Africa, he is read and admired—his memory is revered more than any other poet, whether Scotch, English or Irish.

Tried by all the rules of criticism, it thus appears that the merits of Burns were of the first order. They were recognized as such by all the eminent men of letters of the 19th century. Even the snarling Carlyle, who was abundantly backward in bestowing praise on the writings of any except his own, was compelled to own the merits of Burns. With the exception of a few indiscreet expressions, it may be said of him that, whatever he did, he did it *so well* that it could be done no better. And, whether in painting, drawing, sculpture, statuary, or architecture, this is the best criterion of excellence and success. With respect to his songs—about 209 in number—it is claimed that they are absolutely faultless. It has been well observed

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\* Can as much be said of the admirers of Shakspeare?

that the "charm and power of Burns's poetry consist in the justness of the feelings expressed, and in the truthfulness and freshness which it derives from nature ; and that seldom, if ever, have such tenderness, passion, and manliness been expressed as in his songs."

There is also reason to believe that the effusions of his muse have been productive of much good. In dungeons, and under fiery skies, they have often gladdened the hearts of men. To the medical quack "Death and Dr. Hornbook" shall ever be a standing terror. The "Address to the Unco Guid" has laid bare the hollow pretensions of many a self-righteous hypocrite. The lash of his satire, in the "Ordination" and the "Holy Fair" has humbled the vanity of many a clerical fop. His strains in behalf of the sacred cause of freedom have often fired the soul, and imparted irresistible might to the arm of the patriot. Were it not for "Scots Wha Hae," it is doubtful if British arms would have been so successful in the days of Sir Ralph Abercrombie, Sir John Moore, and the Duke of Wellington. On a June morning sixty-seven years ago, there were drawn out, on two opposing eminences, the British forces under Wellington, and the veterans of France under Bonaparte. Is it not natural to suppose that the Iron Duke, as he surveyed the serried ranks of his foe, would think of the words—

"See the front of battle lower."

And, on the afternoon of that day, when the Scotch Grays, with the ringing cheer—"Scotland for ever"—went crash through the French Cuirassiers, it is almost certain that hundreds of them would have these words sounding in their ears :

"Wha for Scotland's king and law,  
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
Lay the proud usurpers low,  
Tyrants fall in every foe,  
Liberty's in every blow!  
Forward ! let us do or die"

They did go "forward," and all the world knows the result.

5. Burns's *personal habits* and way of living were evidences of his greatness.

See him in his lowly cottage, working on his farm, or in his solitary walks, dressed in the homliest attire. Approach him, speak to him, and then, no matter "to whom related or by whora begot," you find yourself in the presence of real greatness. One glance from those dark eyes, one look from that swarthy and

massive countenance instinctively tell you that your words had better be few, and yourself and your manner respectful. Said one who knew him well, "In his ordinary moods Burns looked a man of a hundred ; but, when animated in company, he was a man of a million. His swarthy features glowed, his eyes kindled up till they all but brightened, his slight stoop vanished, his deep and manly voice became musical, till the dullest owned the enchantments of his genius." "His form," said another, "was manly ; his action, energy itself." Sir Walter Scott saw him once, and this is what he says of him : "His countenance was more *massive* than it looks in any of his portraits. The eye alone indicated the poetic character and temperament,—it was large, and dark, and glowed—I say literally *glowed*—when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time."

Burns's *exertions in behalf of Freedom* have been simply incalculable ; and, were he living to-day, landlords in Ireland, and landed proprietors in Scotland would not carry their heads so high. It would not be easy to mention the foe to human happiness that he did not assail :

"If I'm designed yon lordlings slave—  
By nature's law designed,  
Why was an independent wish  
E'er planted in my mind ?  
If not, why am I subject to  
His cruelty and scorn ?  
Or why has man the will and power  
To make his fellow mourn ?"

Burns saw clearly that man had no such right ; and, with cool collected might, he hurled his thunderbolts at the strongholds of oppression.. It may be doubted if there ever was one who did so much to make despotism ridiculous. In his hands, Satan himself appears contemptible ; and Death as only the rival of Dr. Hornbook.

Other gifted souls—Locke, Milton, and George Buchanan, lavished their stores of erudition in the defence of civil liberty. But their works are known only to scholars. Campbell wept, and made others weep over the wrongs of Poland. Switzerland, Hungary, Italy and America need not be reminded of the sacrifices made, and the hardships endured by a Tell, a Kossuth, a Silvio Pellico, and a Washington. But Burns lifted up his voice against "man's inhumanity to man," all the world over. From amidst the poverty and smoke of his lowly cot, his far-seeing

vision could penetrate the mists of time, while he uttered such words as these :

"The poor, oppressed honest man  
Had surely ne'er been born,  
Had there been no recompense  
To comfort those that mourn."\*

"Then let us pray that come it may  
As it will come for a' that,  
That sense and worth o'er all the earth,  
May bear the gree,<sup>1</sup> and a' that;  
For a' that, and a' that,  
It's coming yet, for a' that—  
That man to man, the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that."†

His own Scotland he loved as few men ever loved their native land. And Scotland loves him in return, with a love that the "floods cannot drown,"

But Burns has been accused of hostility to religion. The accusation is *altogether* untrue. A certain class of the clergy of the day he did hold up to ridicule. But I ask his censurers to produce one instance in which he spoke disrespectfully of the Bible, or the teachings of the Bible. They cannot do it. It was not religion, it was the *caricature* of religion that he exposed. It is a historical fact—a fact well known by Burns's vilifiers—that vital godliness was never at a lower ebb in the Church of Scotland than in his day. And when one possessing his tender sensibilities would see and hear men bearing the name of Ambassadors of Christ preach and pray as if the Diety took special delight in the sufferings of men, he might well be excused for gratifying his powers of sarcasm at their expense. He has been censured for lampooning a clergyman of the name of Russell in the "Holy Fair" :

"But now the Lord's own trumpet touts  
Till a' the hills are raring,  
And echoes back return the shouts,  
Black Russell is na sparing." &c.

That the epithet "black" was not misapplied is evident from these words by one who knew him : "He was the most tremendous man I ever saw ; Black Hugh McPherson was a beauty in comparison. His voice was like thunder." And the following is the evidence of the famous Professor Wilson, in reference

\* Man was Made to Mourn.

<sup>1</sup> Gain the day.

† A man's a man for a' that.

to the same Rev. Mr. Russell: "I was walking one day in the neighborhood of an ancient fortress, (Stirling Castle), and, hearing a noise, to be likened to nothing imaginable in this earth but the bellowing of a buffalo fallen into a trap upon a tiger, which as we came within half a mile of the castle, we discerned to be the voice of a pastor engaged in prayer. His physiognomy was little less alarming than his voice, and the sermon corresponded with his looks and his lungs. I can never think it sinful that Burns would be humorous in such a pulpiteer."

But if any one wishes to see *clerical hirelings* lashed, let him turn up the "Progress of Error," by Cowper. If Burns "chastised them with whips," Cowper "chastised them with scorpions."

*Burns's drinking habits.* This is a subject about which there has been too much said. One of the most violent of Burns's assailants on this score was the celebrated George Gilfillan, (See his *Martyrs and Heroes of the Covenant*). Now it so happens that that book was not more than one hundred years old when Rev. George Gilfillan had to mount the cutty stool himself, and do penance for *his own* drinking habits. That Burns at times drank to excess has never been denied. He himself, with shame and sorrow, confessed it. But it can be proved by contemporary evidence, that he was *habitually* a man of temperate habits, and that excesses were the *exception*. He was the lion of the day. His company was much sought after by strangers from a distance, and by acquaintances in his vicinity; and the custom of the time was to repair to some adjacent inn for social enjoyment. It is admitted that, on these occasions, our poet too often forgot himself. But it is also claimed, in extenuation, that, in those days drinking was not considered such an evil as it is now. At that time, not only in Scotland but Nova Scotia—and by clergy and laity—drinking up to the verge of intoxication was *not* considered immoral. Ardent spirits were then considered one of the necessities of life. Temperance Societies were unheard of, and total abstinence would be regarded as the dream of a madman. Besides, the humble fireside of the unlettered bard was too much frequented by those whom his fame had attracted from afar, encroaching seriously on his time, and subjecting him to unnecessary temptation. It is also a well-known physiological fact that some can drink to excess and not be intoxicated—their coarser nature is not easily overcome by strong drink. It was the reverse of this with Burns. His physical system was so finely strung as to render him peculiarly susceptible to the effects of the intoxicating cup.

But one thing is true ; and he is entitled to the benefit of it. He was a kind husband and the most loving of fathers. " Poor fellow, he never, at any time, said a harsh or unkind word to me." This was the testimony of his wife after the grave had closed over him.

Burns has also been charged with *imprudence*. One thing however is certain—he was a married man with a family. For some time his income was twenty-eight dollars a year. Latterly, it swelled up to the fabulous sum of two hundred and eighty dollars per annum. Still, *he always kept out of debt*. Was that imprudence ? In his writings he unsparingly lashed some of the most prominent men of his day. But neither Dr. Hornbook nor Holy Willie, nor any of the *dramatis personæ* in the "Holy Fair" prosecuted him for libel. In this respect, he was more successful than Shakespeare, who, at the very commencement of his career, subjected himself to a *double* prosecution—one for stealing, another for a libellous poem. Said the late George R. Young, "I may say a stupid thing, but catch me *doing* a stupid thing."\* So with Burns. He was guilty of his indiscretions. If so, he did not need that any one would point them out to him. He was aware of them himself. His better judgment condemned them ; and his honesty freely confessed them. Can this much be said for some other distinguished erring mortals ? But whatever Burns's aberrations were, it becomes those favored beings that are "without sin" to indulge in the recreation of "casting the first stone at him."

" But see him on the edge of life,  
With cares and sorrows worn."

He knew well that his days were nearly ended. At that solemn period—his health gone, and forsaken by man—he "girded up his loins!" He sent abroad no wailing cry for help.† In the prospect of death, he displayed fully as much fortitude, and made far less fuss than ever John Knox did. Unlike Sir Walter Scott he did not ask any one to "read to him out of the Book." He performed that sacred office for himself. Sankey and Bliss had not, as yet, appeared on the horizon. If they had, there is reason to believe that the languishing Burns would have welcomed their advent. And, while reviewing the past,

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\* These words were addressed by Mr. Y. to the writer shortly before his death. George R. Young may not have been the Robert Burns of Nova Scotia in the poetic line; but he possessed not a few of the poet's manly qualities. Like the poet also, *his merits were recognized when it was too late*.

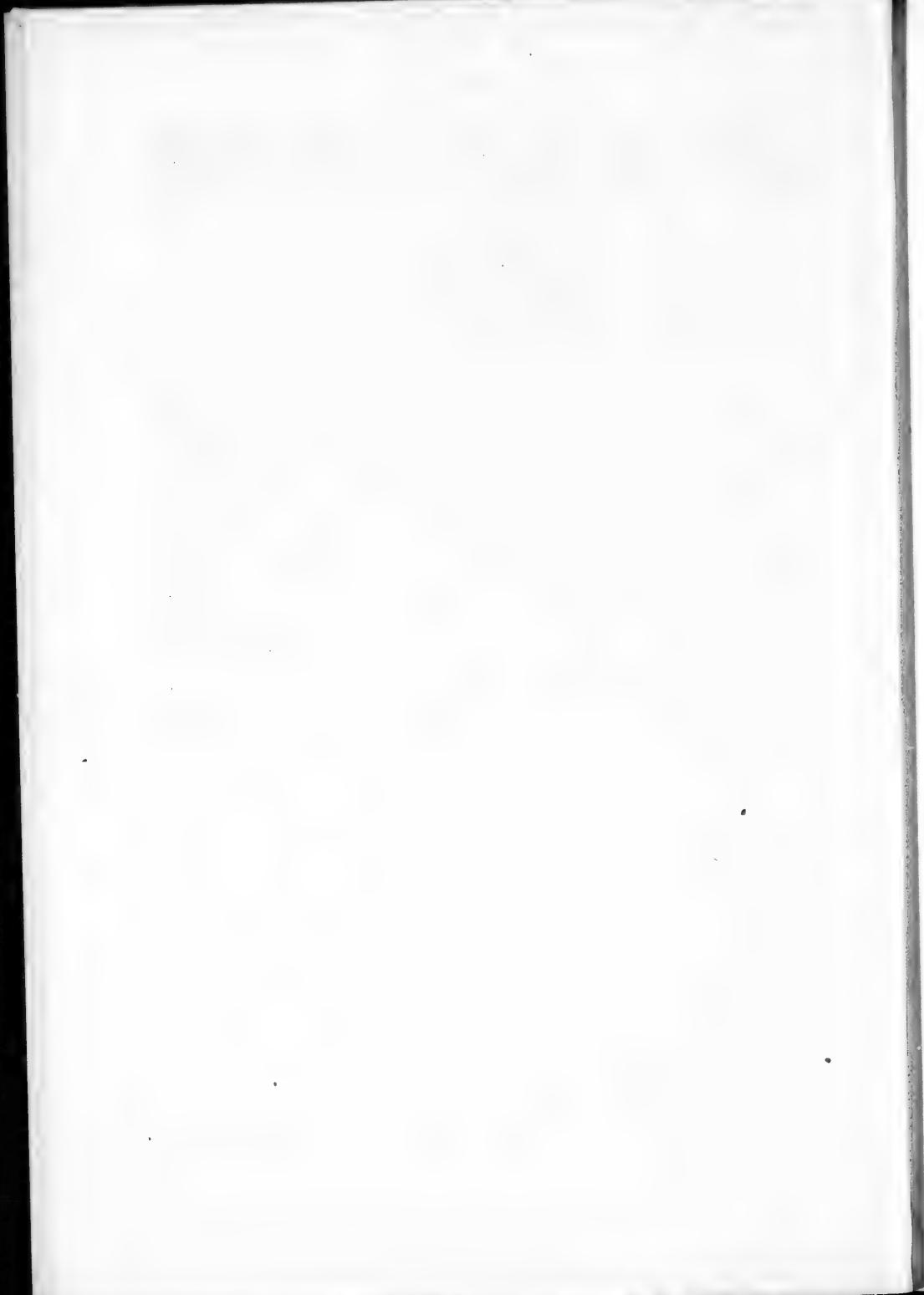
† Spiritual help.

surveying the present, or anticipating the future, with what ecstatic joy would he sing, "There is a gate that stands ajar?" With what seraphic might would his deep-toned voice join in the strain :

" Jesus paid it all,  
All to him I owe,  
Sin had left a crimson stain :  
He washed it white as snow."

" When from my dying bed,  
My ransom'd soul shall rise,  
Jesus paid it all,  
*Shall rend the vaulted skies.*"

On the 18th July, 1796, he came home from his sea-bathing quarters, but so weak that it was with difficulty he could walk into his own house. The three following were gloomy days in Dumfries and its neighborhood. From house to house the word spread that Burns was dying. That well-known figure would never again be seen on their pavements. These same streets are now filled with anxious groups. All their talking was about Burns. Many were the glances directed to the humble cottage. It was now felt that a "great man and a prince" was dying. On the 21st he breathed his last. His funeral was on the 26th, when peer and peasant vied to do him honor. Two Regiments—one of infantry and one of cavalry—lined the streets from the Town Hall to the burying ground, a distance of half a mile. From ten to twelve thousand took part in the procession ; and, as the body was laid in the grave, it has been recorded that "few faces were dry."



SELECTIONS  
FROM  
BURNS'S POEMS.

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THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

(Commencing at the 100th line, where *family worship* is described.)

" The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,  
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide ;  
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,  
The big ha' Bible, once his father's pride ;  
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,  
His lyart haffets <sup>1</sup> wearing thin and bare ;  
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
He wales <sup>2</sup> a portion with judicious care,  
And " Let us worship God," he says with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;  
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim :  
Perhaps " Dundee's" wild, warbling measures rise,  
Or plaintive " Martyrs " worthy of the name ;  
Or noble " Elgin " beats the heavenward flame,  
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :  
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame ;  
The tickled ear no heartfelt raptures raise ;  
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,  
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;  
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage  
With Amalek's ungracious progeny :  
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie  
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;  
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;  
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;  
Or other holy seers that tune the lyre.

Perhaps the Christian Volume is the theme,  
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;  
How He who bore in heaven the second name,  
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head :  
How His first followers and servants sped,  
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land :  
How he who lone in Patmos banished,  
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand ;  
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

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<sup>1</sup> Grey temples.    <sup>2</sup> Selects.

Then, kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,  
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays ;  
 Hope " springs exulting on triumphant wing,"  
 That thus they all shall meet in future days :  
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,  
 No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,  
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,  
 In such society, yet still more dear ;  
 While circling times moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor religion's pride,  
 In all the pomp of method and of art,  
 When men display to congregations wide,  
 Devotion's every grace, except the heart.  
 The Power incensed, the pageant will desert,  
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole :  
 But, haply, in some cottage far apart,  
 May hear, well-pleased, the language of the soul ;  
 And, in his Book of Life, the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their several way ;  
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest :  
 The parent-pair their secret homage pay,  
 And proffer up to Heaven the warm request  
 That He who stills the raven's clamorous nest  
 And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,  
 Would, in the way his wisdom seems the best,  
 For them and for their little ones provide ;  
 But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,  
 That makes her loved at home, revered abroad ;  
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,  
 " An honest man's the noblest work of God,"  
 And, certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,  
 The cottage leaves the palace far behind.  
 What is a lordling's pomp ? a cumbrous load,  
 Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,  
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined !

O Scotia, my dear, my native soil !  
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,  
 Long may the hardy sons of rustic toil  
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content :  
 And, Oh ! may Heaven their simple lives prevent  
 From luxury's contagion, week and vile !  
 Then, how'er crowns and coronets be rent,  
 A virtuous populace may rise the while  
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou who pour'd the patriotic tide  
 That stream'd through Wallace's undaunted heart :  
 Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,  
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part.  
 (The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,  
 His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !)  
 Oh, never, never, Scotia's realm desert ;  
 But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard  
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard ?"

## TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

On the third anniversary of Highland Mary's death, Burns's wife noticed that towards evening "he grew sad about something, went out into the barn-yard where he strode restlessly up and down for some time, although repeatedly asked to come in. Immediately on entering the house, he sat down and wrote the following verses."

"Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,  
That lovest to greet the early morn,  
Again thou usher'st in the day  
My Mary from my soul was torn.

O Mary ! dear departed shade,  
Where is thy place of blissful rest ?  
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid ?  
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?

That sacred hour can I forget ?  
Can I forget the hallowed grove,  
Where by the winding Ayr we met,  
To live one day of parting love ?

Eternity will not efface  
Those records dear of transports past ;  
Thy image at our last embrace ;  
Ah ! little thought we 'twas our last !

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,  
O'erhung with wild woods thick'ning green ;  
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar  
Twined am'rous round the raptured scene ;

The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,  
The birds sang love on every spray—  
Till soon, too soon, the glowing West  
Proclaimed the speed of winged day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes.  
And fondly broods with miser care.  
Time but the impression deeper makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear.

My Mary ! dear departed shade !  
Where is thy place of blissful rest ?  
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid ?  
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?"

## MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

"When chill November's surly blast  
Made fields and forests bare,  
One evening, as I wandered forth  
Along the banks of Ayr,  
I spied a man whose aged step  
Seem'd weary, worn with care ;  
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,  
And hoary was his hair.

Young stranger, whither wander'st thou ?  
 Began the rev'rend sage ;  
 Does thirst of wealth thy steps constrain,  
 Or youthful pleasures rage ;  
 Or haply, prest with cares and woes,  
 Too soon hast thou began  
 To wander forth, with me, to mourn  
 The miseries of man !

The sun that overhangs yon moors,  
 Out-spreading far and wide,  
 Where hundreds labour to support  
 A haughty lordlings pride ;  
 I've seen yon weary winter-sun  
 Twice forty times return ;  
 And every time was added proofs  
 That man was made to mourn.

O man ! while in thy early years,  
 How prodigal of time !  
 Misspending all thy precious hours,  
 Thy glorious youthful prime !  
 Alternate follies take the sway ;  
 Licentious passions burn ;  
 Which tenfold force gives nature's law,  
 That man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,  
 Or manhood's active might ;  
 Man then is useful to his kind,  
 Supported is his right :  
 But see him on the edge of life,  
 With cares and sorrows worn ;  
 Then, age and want— Oh ! ill-matched pair—  
 Show man was made to mourn.

A few seem favorites of fate,  
 In pleasure's lap carest ;  
 Yet think not all the rich and great  
 Are likewise truly blest.  
 But Oh ! what crowds in ev'ry land.  
 Are wretched and forlorn ?  
 Through weary life, this lesson learn—  
 That man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills,  
 Inwoven with our frame ;  
 More pointed still, we make ourselves,  
 Regret, remorse, and shame !  
 And man, whose, heav'n erected face  
 The smiles of love adorn,  
 Men's inhumanity to man  
 Makes countless thousands mourn.

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd weight,  
 So abject, mean, and vile,  
 Who begs a brother of the earth  
 To give him leave to toil ;  
 And see his lordly fellow-worm  
 The poor petition spurn,  
 Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife  
 And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordlings slave—  
 By nature's law design'd  
 Why was an independent wish  
 E'er planted in my mind ?  
 If not, why am I subject to  
 His cruelty and scorn ?  
 Or why has man the will and power  
 To make his fellow mourn ?

Yet, let not this, too much, my son,  
 Disturb thy youthful breast ;  
 This partial view of human-kind  
 Is surely not the last.  
 The poor, oppressed, honest man  
 Had never, sure been born,  
 Had there not been some recompense  
 To comfort those that mourn.

O Death, the poor man's dearest friend,  
 The kindest and the best !  
 Welcome the hour my aged limbs  
 Are laid, with thee at rest !  
 The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow  
 From pomp and pleasure torn ;  
 But Oh ! a blest relief to those  
 That weary-laden mourn !"

#### SCOTS WHA HAE.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,  
 Scots, wham Bruce has often led ;  
 Welcome to your gory bed,  
 Or to glorious victory.

Now's the day, and now's the hour ;  
 See the front o' battle lower ;  
 See approach proud Edward's power—  
 Edward ! Chains and slavery !

Wha will be a traitor knave ?  
 Wha can fill a cowards grave ?  
 Wha so base as be a slave ?  
 Traitor ! Coward ! turn and flee.

Wha for Scotland's king and law  
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
 Freeman stand, or freeman fa',  
 Caledonians ! on wi' me !

By oppression's woes and pains !  
 By your sons in servile chains !  
 We will drain our dearest veins,  
 But they shall be free.

Lay the proud usurpers low,  
 Tyrants fall in every foe,  
 Liberty's in every blow.  
 Forward ! let us do or die !

## SOME OF BURNS'S WISE SAYINGS.

"But *pleasures* are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed.  
Or like the snowfall in the river,  
A moment white, then melts forever ;  
Or like the Borealis race,  
That fit ere you can point their place ;  
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,  
Evanishing amid the storm."

"But *facts* are chiefs that dinna ding <sup>1</sup>  
And dare not be disputed."

"O would some power the giftie gie us."  
*To see ourselves as others see us.*"

"I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
Has broken Nature's social union."

"The best laid schemes of mice and men  
Gang aft a-gley."<sup>2</sup>

"The rank is but the guinea *stamp*,  
The man's the gowd<sup>3</sup> for a' that."

"A prince can make a belted knight,  
A marquis, duke, and a' that ;  
But an honest man's aboon<sup>4</sup> his might,  
Guid faith, he mauna<sup>5</sup> fa' that."

## SHOWING BURNS'S SYMPATHY FOR NEGLECTED MERIT.

O Ferguson, thy glorious parts,  
Ill suited law's, dry, musty arts.  
My curse upon your whinstone hearts  
Ye Edinburgh Gentry,  
The tithe of what<sup>6</sup> waste at Cartes<sup>6</sup>  
Would stow'd his pantry.

## SHOWING HIS DETESTATION OF OPPRESSION.

See stern Oppression's iron grip,  
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,  
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,  
Woe, want, and murder o'er the land !  
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,  
Truf<sup>1</sup>., weeping tells the mournful tale,  
How pamper'd luxury—flatt'ry by her side—  
Looks o'er proud property extended wide ;  
And eyes the simple rustic hind,  
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show,  
A creature of another kind,  
Some coarse substance unrefined,  
Pla<sup>2</sup>rd for her lordly use, thus far, thus vile below.

<sup>1</sup> Wont budge.      <sup>2</sup> Often miscarry.  
<sup>4</sup> Above.      <sup>5</sup> He must not try that.

<sup>3</sup> Gold  
<sup>6</sup> Playing Cards.

I've seen the Oppressor's *Cruel Smile*  
 Amidst his hapless victim's spoil ;  
 And, for thy potency, vainly wished,  
 To crush the villain in the dust.\*

I've noticed, on our Laird's court-day,  
 And many a time my heart's been wae,<sup>1</sup>  
 Poor tenant bodies scant o'cash,  
 Now they must bear a factor's snash ;  
 He'll stamp and threaten, curse and swear,  
 He'll apprehend them, poind their gear,  
 While they must stand with aspect humble,  
 And hear it all, and fear and tremble.

#### SHOWING HIS DETESTATION OF MERE MONEY MAKING.

O mandate glorious and divine !  
 The ragged followers of the Nine  
 Poor thoughtless d-v-s yet may shine  
 In glorious light,  
 While sordid sons of Mammon's line  
 Are dark as night.

Tho' here they scra<sup>-</sup>, and squeeze, and growl,  
 Their worthless nieveful<sup>2</sup> of a soul  
 May, in some future carcase howl  
 The forest's fright ;  
 Or, in some day-detesting owl,  
 May shun the light.

Awa, ye selfish worldly race,  
 Wha think that havins,<sup>3</sup> sense, and grace,  
 Ev'n love, and friendship should give place.  
 To catch the plack<sup>4</sup> ?  
 I do not like to see your face,  
 Nor hear your talk.  
 The worldly race may drudge and drive,  
 Hag—shouther, jundie,<sup>5</sup> stretch and strive :  
 Let me fair nature's face describe,  
 And I, with pleasure,  
 Shall let the busy, grumbling hive  
 Hum owre their treasure.

\* These lines were written by the poet on the back of a Bank Note. Burns represents the man that would distress a poor family—perhaps an orphan family—as a villain. So does the Bible.

<sup>1</sup> Been sad.

<sup>2</sup> Fistful.

<sup>3</sup> Good manners.

<sup>4</sup> To make money.

<sup>5</sup> Push.

## SHOWING HIS LOVE FOR SCOTLAND.

Even then a wish (I mind its power)—  
 A wish that, to my latest hour,  
 Shall strongly heave my breast ;  
 That I, for poor old Scotland's sake,  
 Some useful plan or book might make,  
 Or sing a song at least.

The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide  
 Among the bearded bear,<sup>1</sup>  
 I turned the wedding hook aside,  
 And spared the symbol dear.

Th' Illisus, Tiber, Thames, and Seine,  
 Glide sweet in many a tuneful line ;  
 But Mille, set your foot to mine,  
 And cock your crest,  
 We'll gar <sup>2</sup> our stream and burnies <sup>3</sup> shine  
 Up with the best.

We'll sing auld Coila's plains and fells,  
 Her moors red-brown with heather bells,  
 Her banks and braes, her dens and dells,  
 Where glorious Wallace  
 Aft bured the gree,<sup>4</sup> as story tells,  
 Trae Southron billies.

## PITHY MAXIMS.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,  
 And, Andrew, believe me,  
 Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,  
 And muckle they may grieve thee.

I'll no say, men are villains a' ;  
 The real hard'nd wicked  
 Wha hae nae check but human law  
 Are to a few restricted.

But, och mankind are unco weak,  
 And little to be trusted ;  
 If self the wavering balance shake,  
 It's rarely right adjusted.

The fear of hell's a hangman's whip  
 To keep the wretch in order ;  
 But where you feel your honour grip,  
 Let that aye be your border.

The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,  
 And o'er the cottage sings ;  
 For nature smiles as sweet, I ween,  
 To shepherds as to kings.

## TAM O' SHANTER.

## A TALE.

When Chapman billies leave the street,  
 And drouthy neebors neebors meet,  
 As market days are wearing late,  
 An' folk begin to take the gate ;  
 While we sit bousing at the nappy  
 And getting fou and unco happy,  
 We think na on the lang Scots' miles,  
 The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,  
 That lie between us and our hame,  
 Whare sits our sultry sullen dame.  
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,  
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth found honest Tam O' Shanter,  
 As he from Ayr, one night, did canter,  
 (Auld Ayr wham ne'er a town surpasses,  
 For honest men and bonny lasses).

O Tam, had'st thou but been sae wise,  
 As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice !  
 She tauld thee weel thou wast skellum  
 A blethering, blustering, drunken, blellum ;  
 That, frae November till October,  
 Ae market-day thou wast na sober,  
 That ilka melder wi' the miller,  
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;  
 That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,  
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on,  
 That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,  
 Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.  
 She prophesy'd that, late or soon,  
 Thou would be found deep drowned in Doon ;  
 Or catch'd wi' warlochs in the mirk,  
 By Alloway's auld haunted Kirk,

Ah, gentle dames ! it gars me greet,  
 To think how many counsels sweet,  
 How many lengthen'd, sage advices  
 The husband frae the wife despises !

But to our tale : Ae market night,  
 Tam had got planted unco right ;  
 Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,  
 Wi' reaming swats that drank divinely ;  
 And, at his elbow souter Johnny,  
 His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony ;  
 Tam lov'd him like a vera brither ;  
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.  
 The night drove on wi' sangs an' clatter ;  
 And aye the ale was growing better ;  
 The landlady and Tam grew gracious,  
 Wi' favours secret sweet and precious :  
 The souter tauld his queerest stories ;  
 The landlord's laugh was ready chorus :  
 The storm without might rair and rustle,  
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,

E'en drown'd himself among the nappy ;  
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure  
 The minutes wring'd their way wi' pleasure :  
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,  
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.

But pleasures are like poppies spread,  
 You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed ;  
 Or like the snow-falls in the river,  
 A moment white—then melts forever ;  
 Or, like the borealis race,  
 That fit ere you can point their place ;  
 Or, like the rainbow's lovely form—  
 Evanishing amid the storm.  
 Nae man can tether time or tide ;  
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride,  
 The hour o' night's black arch the key-stane,  
 That dreary hour he mounts his beast in ;  
 And sic a night he takes the road in,  
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twas blawin its last ;  
 The rattling show'rs rose on the blast ;  
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd ;  
 Loud deep and lang the thunder bellow'd :  
 That night, a child might understand  
 The Deil had business on hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg—  
 A better never lifted leg,  
*Tam* skelpit on thro' dub and mire,  
 Despising wind, and rain and fire ;  
 Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet ;  
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet ;  
 Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,  
 Lest boggles catch him unawares ;  
*Kirk Alloway* was drawing nigh,  
 Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time, he was cross the ford,  
 Whare, in the snaw, the chapman smoor'd,  
 And past the birks, and mukle stane,  
 Whare drunken *Charlie* brak's neck bane ;  
 And thro' the whins and by the cairn,  
 Whare hunters faud the murder'd bairn ;  
 And near the thorn, aboon the well,  
 Whare *Mungo*'s mither hang'd hersel.  
 Before him, Doon pours all his floods,  
 The doublin storm roars thro' the woods ;  
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole ;  
 Near and more near the thunders roll ;  
 When, glimmering thro', the groaning trees ;  
*Kirk Alloway* seem'd in a breeze ;  
 Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing ;  
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.  
 Inspiring bold *John Barleycorn*,  
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn !  
 Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil,  
 Wi' Usquebae we'll face the devil.  
 The swats sae ream'd in *Tammie*'s noddle,  
 Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.  
 But *Maggie* stood right sair astonish'd,  
 Till, by the heel and hand admonished,  
 She ventured, forward on the light ;  
 And lo ! Tam saw an unco sight !

Warlocks and witches in a dance ;  
 Nae Cottillon brent new frae France,  
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,  
 Put life and mettle in their heels.  
 A winnock-bunker in the east,  
 There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast ;  
 A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,  
 To give them music was his charge.  
 He screw'd the pipes, and gart them skirl,  
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.  
 Coffins stood round, like open presses,  
 That show'd the dead in their last dresses ;  
 And, by some devilish cantrip slight,  
 Each in its could hand held a light,  
 By which heroic *Tam* was able,  
 To note upon the haly table,  
 A murderer's banes in gibbet airns ;  
 Twa span-lang wee, unchristen'd bairns ;  
 A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,  
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape ;  
 Five tomahawks wi' bluid red-rusted ;  
 Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted ;  
 A garter, which a babe had strangled ;  
 A knife a father's throat had mangled,  
 Whem his ain son o' life bereft,  
 The gray hairs yet stack to the heft ;  
 Wi' mair o' horrible and awful,  
 Which ev'n to name would be unlawful.

As *Tammie* glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,  
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious :  
 The piper loud and louder blew ;  
 The dancers quick and quicker flew ;  
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleek it ;  
 Till ilka swat and reel it,  
 And coost heruddies to the wark,  
 And linket at it in her sark.

Now *Tam*, O *Tam* ! had they been queans,  
 A' plump and strapping, in their teens ;  
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,  
 Been snaw-white seventeen hundred linen,  
 Thir breeks o' mine—my only pair,  
 That once were plush o' guid blue hair  
 I wad hae ge'en them aff my hurdies,  
 For ae blink o' the bonnie birdies.

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,  
 Rigwoodie hags wad spean a' foal,  
 Louping and flinging on a crummock,  
 I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But *Tam* kenn'd what was what fu' brawlie,  
 There was ae winsome wench and walie,  
 That night enlisted in the core,  
 (Lang after kenn'd on *Carrick* shore !  
 For mony a beast to dead she shot,  
 And perished mony a bonnie boat,  
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear  
 And kept the country-side in fear),  
 Her cutty sark o' Paisley harn,  
 That, while a lassie, she had worn,  
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,  
 It was her best, and she was vauntie.  
 Ah ! little kenn'd thy rev'rend grannie,

That sark she coft for her wee *Nannie*,  
 Wi' twa punds scots (twas a' her riches),  
 Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches !

But here my muse her wing maun, cour  
 Such flights are far beyond her power ;  
 To sing how *Nannie* lap and flang,  
 (A souple jade she was and strang),  
 And how *Tam* stood like one bewitch'd,  
 And thought his very een enrich'd ;  
 E'en Satan glowr'd, and fudg'd fu' fain,  
 And watch'd and blew wi' might and main :  
 Till first ae caper, synge anither,  
 Tam tint his reason a' thegither,  
 And roars out, " weel done cutty-sark " !  
 When, in an instant all was dark :  
 And scarcely had he *Maggie* rallied,  
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,  
 When plundering herds assail their byke,  
 As open pussie's mortal foes,  
 When, pop, she starts before their nose ;  
 As eager runs the market-crowd,  
 When " catch the thief " resounds aloud,  
 So *Maggie* runs, the witches follow,  
 Wi' mony an eldrritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, *Tam* ! ah, *Tam* ! thou'll get thy fairin !  
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin !  
 In vain thy *Kate* awaits thy comin !  
*Kate* soon will be a woefu' woman !  
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, *Meg*,  
 And win the key-stane of the brig ;  
 There, at them, thou thy tail may toss,  
 A running stream they dare na cross.  
 But, ere the key-stane she could make,  
 The fiend a tail she had to shake !  
 For *Nannie* far before the rest,  
 Hard upon noble *Maggie* prest,  
 And flew at *Tam* wi' furious ettle ;  
 But little wist she *Maggie*'s nettle—  
 Ae spring brought off her master hale,  
 But left behind her ain grey tail :  
 Thy Carlin caught her by the rump,  
 And left poor *Maggie* scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,  
 Ilk man, and mither's son, tak heed :  
 Whene'er on drink you are inclin'd,  
 Or cutty sarks run in your mind,  
 Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,  
 Remember *Tam O' Shanter's* Mare.

## ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID.

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel,  
 Sae pious and sae holy,  
 Ye've nought to do but mark and tell  
   Your neebur's faults and folly !  
 Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,  
   Supplied wi' store o' water,  
 The heapeit happen's ebbing still,  
   And still the clap plays clatter,

Hear me, ye venerable core,  
 As counsel for poor mortals,  
 That frequent pass douce Wisdom door  
   For glaik it Folly's portals ;  
 I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,  
   Would here propose defences,  
 Their dousie tricks, their black mistakes,  
   Their failings and mischances,

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,  
   And shudder at the niffer ;  
 But, cast a moment's fair regard,  
   What makes the mighty differ ?  
 Discount what scant occasion gave,  
   That purity ye pride in,  
 And, (what's aft mair than a' the lave),  
   Your better art o' hiding.

Think, when your castigated pulse  
 Gies, now and then, a wallop,  
 What raging must his veins convulse,  
   That still eternal gallop :  
 Wi' wind and tide fair in your tail,  
   Right on ye scud your sea-way :  
 But, in the teeth o' baith to sail,  
   It makes an unco leeway.

See social life and glee sit down,  
   All joyous and unthinking,  
 Till, quite transmogrified they're grown  
   Debauchery and drinking :  
 O, would they stay to calculate  
   Th' eternal consequences ;  
 Or your more dreaded hell to state—  
   Damnation of expenses.

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,  
   Ty'd up in godly laces,  
 Before ye gie poor frailty names,  
   Suppose a change o' cases ;  
 A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,  
   A treacherous inclination,  
 But, let me whisper in your lug,  
   Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then, gently scan your brother man,  
 Still gentler sister woman ;  
 Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang—  
     To step aside is human :  
 One point must still be greatly dark—  
     The moving *why* they do it :  
 And just as lamely can ye mark,  
     How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, tis *He* alone  
 Decidedly can try us,  
 He knows each chord—its various tone,  
     Each spring—its various bias :  
 Then, at the balance, let's be mute,  
     We never can adjust it ;  
 What's *done* we partly may compute,  
     But know not what's *resisted*.

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### HIGHLAND MARY.

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Ye banks, and braes, and streams around  
 The castle o' Montgomery,  
 Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,  
     Your waters never drumlie !  
 There summer first unfold her robes,  
     And there the longest tarry ;  
 For there I took the last farewell  
     O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly blow'd the gay green birk,  
     How rich the hawthorn's blossom,  
 As, underneath their fragrant shade,  
     I clasp'd her to my bosom !  
 The golden hours, on angel' wings,  
     Flew o'er me and my dearie ;  
 For dear to me as light and life  
     Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace  
     Our parting was full tender :  
 And pledging aft to meet again,  
     We tore oursels asunder ;  
 But Oh ! fell death's untimely frost  
     That nipt my flower sae early.  
 Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay  
     That wraps my Highland Mary !

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,  
     I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly !  
 And closed for aye, the spark'ling glance  
     That dwelt on me sae kindly !  
 And mould'ring now, in silent dust  
     That heart that lov'd me dearly !  
 But still, within my bosom's core,  
     Shall live my Highland Mary.

